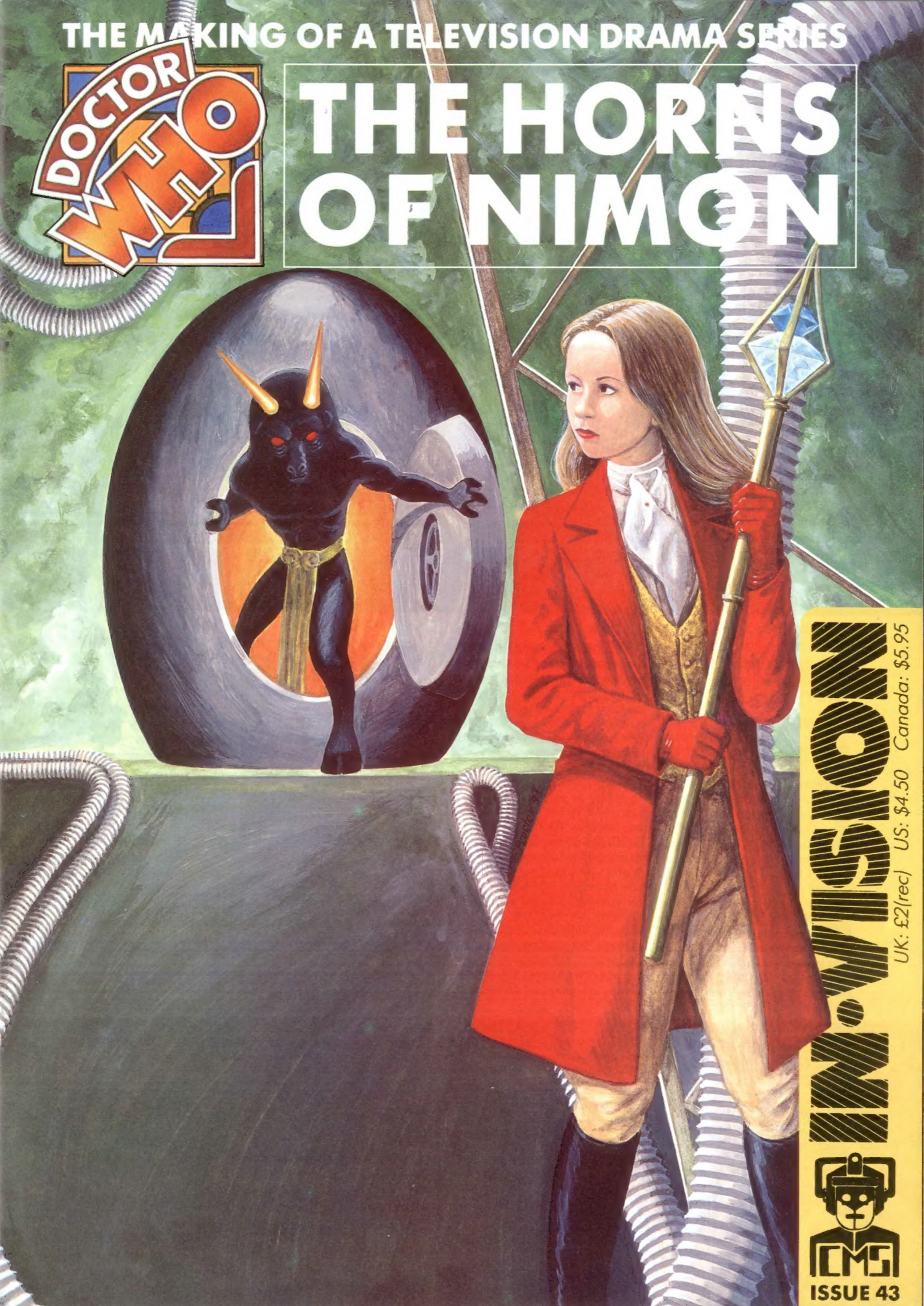
THE MAKING OF A TELEVISION DRAMA SERIES

DOCTOR WHO

THE HORNS OF NIMON



NIMON

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CMS

ISSUE 43

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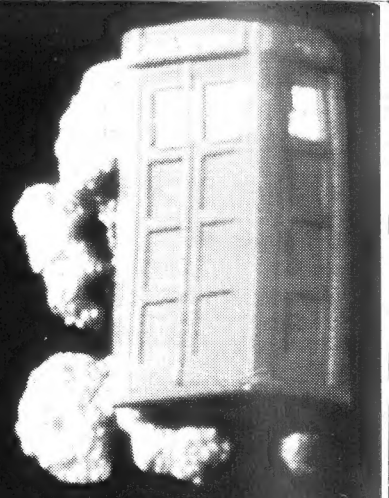
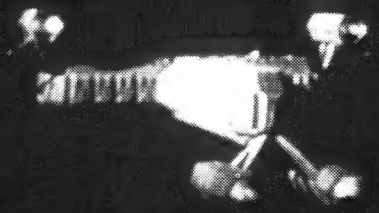




Season 17
Story 108 (5L)
Episodes
522 - 525

THE HORNS OF NIMON is not a story which *Doctor Who* which fans tend to remember with affection. This issue we examine the production of the story and some of the narrative aspects in an attempt to find out what went wrong.

The Production essays ennumerate the hard work and attention which went into the creation of THE HORNS OF NIMON. The interview with costume designer June Hudson is further evidence of the care and thought expended on the story (see pages 8 and 9).

From the narrative perspective, the character studies on page 3 explore the characterisations and motivations of the people in thestory - aspects which by and large were left unexplored on screen but are made more explicit in Terrance Dicks' novelistion of the script.

In the review on pages 12 and 13 we try to sum up the diverse aspects of THE HORNS OF NIMON and account for the story's ultimate failure despite the straightforward narrative and care of production. In doing so, we see just how close THE HORNS OF NIMON came to being a success. By implication we find, too, just how easy it is for a *Doctor Who* to fail. Perhaps the surprise is not that THE HORNS OF NIMON is no classic, but that so many *Doctor Who* stories are executed so successfully. □

Origins

THE MONEY had run out. Not for the first time in **Doctor Who**'s long history the Producer and his associates (most notably the Production Unit Manager) were going to have to make something out of virtually nothing.

Throughout the 'Sixties and 'Seventies **Doctor Who** Producers had accepted that if they wanted to do *showcase* stories they would be required to balance their books by bringing in one or two stories per year under budget. In the past this had generally been a painless exercise, but with inflation such a debilitating factor in ruining all pre-set budget plans throughout the television industry in 1979, the ends of the seasons were becoming harder and harder to reconcile between artistic and financial considerations.

The financial decisions on what would become almost the lowest pro-rata costed serial of the 'Seventies were taken by Graham Williams. Believing he had got it wrong the previous year by spending on THE POWER OF KROLL to the detriment of THE ARMAGEDDON FACTOR, his inclination this year was to do the reverse. So he decided to hold back on story five and put funds aside for his season finale, SHADA.

Dictates for THE HORNS OF NIMON were therefore as follows:

- It had to be all studio bound with no provision for location or any pre-filming.
- There would be almost no allocation for model work on film.
- A small cast only, with severe restrictions imposed on the hiring of Grade C or above priced artists.
- Set construction to be as basic as possible.
- Costumes to be simple (and cheap).
- Limited make-up to reduce the need for too many assistants.
- Low overhead for visual effects.

It was to be a skeletal **Doctor Who** story. □

Characters

Soldeed

IN THE wasteland of the Skonnon political system, Soldeed seems like a last resort for his people. Their Empire has crumbled away through a combination of viciousness and ineptitude, and the only power they have left is the fear that their reputation strikes in their former victims.

Thus Soldeed symbolises the plight of his people. His control is a facade - whether his pretended manipulation of the Nimon, his blustering ballyhoo in front of the ragged remnants of the Skonnon military, or his pretended scientific knowledge. It is his performance skills alone which keep him in charge. And what a performance. He has turned his every dealing with the Nimon into a near-religious event and the Power Complex into a place of punishment and death. He relishes the control given to him by the Nimon, symbolised by the alien staff he wields so grandly.

He doesn't understand what the Nimon says, especially when referring t the Great Journey of Life, but he can convince others by playing on their social fear of seeming stupid by questioning him more closely. When he does understand a situation, he can lay cruel traps: he uses his limited understanding of hymetusite (which is to say, how to pronounce the word) to trick the Co-Pilot. And he enjoys trading on the historical terror that Anethans have of Skonnons.

He has clearly convinced even himself that he controls the Nimon, and that the Nimon will altruistically furnish him with the technology and the knowledge to restore the Skonnon empire and forge "an empire of fire, steel and blood." He will not believe the truth until he stares it in the face - or at least, until three Nimons stare him in the face. His brittle pretence crumbles like the former Skonnon Empire, and he loses everything - including his self esteem and his self control. He has nothing left to live for. □

Sorak

IF SORAK is any indication of the standard of Skonnon soldiers, then it's no wonder the Empire's in such a mess. Despite the traditional strength of the military, he has allowed himself to be outmanoeuvred by sham scientist Soldeed, whose incantations about "the second Skonnon Empire" and regurgitation of the Nimon mantra about "The Great Journey of Life" is enough to keep Sorak in bemused obedience almost throughout.

Even though he seems to have some mechanical skills of his own when it comes to reconstructing K-9 from the bits left by the bumbling Soldeed, Sorak's only military response to K-9 blasting him is to surrender.

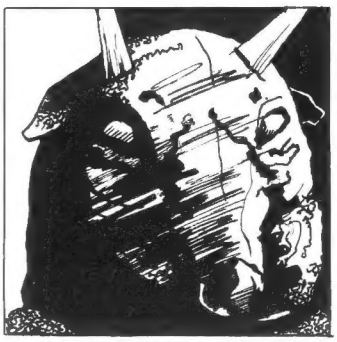
In the end, the Doctor seems to have some confidence that Sorak will be able to handle the remains of the Skonnon Empire. We should perhaps ask the question: is this because there is so little of the Empire left, or just that Sorak couldn't do worse than his predecessor? □

Nimon

THE UNNAMED Nimon who first travelled to Skonnos has none of the impatience of his fellows on Crinoth. He has strung Soldeed along skilfully to establish the black hole bridgehead, clearly aware that he can use the maze-like properties of his creation to confuse and control his unfortunate victims.

While the other Nimons make a snap decision which ultimately destroys their race on Crinoth, the first Nimon calmly takes setbacks in his stack-heeled stride. So when the improbable hero Seth and sidekick Teka escape, or when he discovers he is two hymetusite crystals short of a load, the Nimon is unperturbed.

His downfall is only as a result of the Doctor and Romana's intervention - an even impossible to anticipate, given his experience of Skonnon and Anethan obeisance. □



Sezom

UNLIKE his stupid Skonnon counterpart, Sezom is a true man of science. Just as the Nimon must have skilfully identified the character flaw of each victim planet's inhabitants, so they must have recognised in Sezom a man who would happily set aside his own scientific hubris and accept the assistance of a superior technology for the good of his people.

If he has a fault, then, it is his naive belief in Nimon altruism. However, he redeems himself in two ways.

Firstly, he is clearly a scientist, as his research into the properties of jasonite reveals. Secondly, he realistically acknowledges that his race is doomed, and sacrifices his life so that Romana can escape to help the Doctor save Skonnos. □

Script

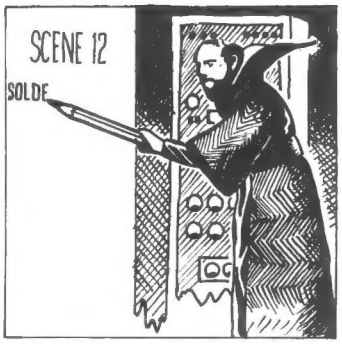
LUCKILY Anthony Read's four part submission could fairly easily accommodate these limitations. The roots of its storyline went back even before his handover as Script Editor to Douglas Adams in November 1978. Throughout his tenure as **Doctor Who**'s Script Editor, Read had prompted several writers to produce a storyline based on the concept of a *Mary Celeste* in space. He had suggested just such a topic in correspondence with a number of prospective writers for the show.

His other fascination was using ancient mythology as the basis for script ideas. Just as Terry Nation and Dennis Spooner had advocated adapting the works of Shakespeare, so Read preferred the notion of modifying classical legends into modern science-fiction. Both UNDERWORLD and THE POWER OF KROLL had been examples of this thinking. His personal interest in Crete and the Minoan legends had been fostered some years earlier while working on **The Lotus Eaters** - an expensive BBC 2 drama serial which had seen cast and crew spending nearly a month filming on location among the Minoan ruins in Crete.

In particular, Anthony Read had been thinking about the Minotaur myth with the labryinth. He thought it was anyway a science fiction-type story, complete with its monster at the end of the tunnel: "It's a timeless myth and a classic situation. Throughout time mazes and labyrinths have had mystical powers one could 'tune in to'."

Read's commission to write THE HORNS OF NIMON (which had no other working title) was formalised shortly after his handover to Douglas Adams. Falling back on the long-standing perk whereby outgoing Script Editors are "allowed" to commission themselves as writers for the series they are leaving, Read allocated himself a four-part slot in season 17, before moving on to become both writer and Script-Editor for the **Hammer House of Horror** series on ITV.

The volume of work Read took on at **Hammer** delayed his tackling of the **Doctor Who** script until June 1979, by which time the shape of the season had been more or less worked out by Williams and Adams.



Aware that nearly all penultimate stories of a season tended to be studio bound (KROLL had been an exception) his script was deliberately written without any provision for film.

The script did, however, contain one potentially expensive overhead: the Nimon complex. Conceiving the Nimon's lair as a giant electro-mechanical circuit, Read imagined whole labyrinths of moving walls, panels and ducts which slid open and shut every time its Nimon occupant activated different channels/maze pathways in the circuit. Ultimately, shifting camera perspectives would have to accomplish what budget resources could not afford in set design.

Such was Anthony Read's understanding of the series he had worked on for eighteen months solid that virtually none of his material had to be edited or re-written prior to the Director joining. His script was near enough text book **Doctor Who** in terms of affordability, practicality, casting and structure. It was the easiest of all the stories Douglas Adams had to edit that year. □

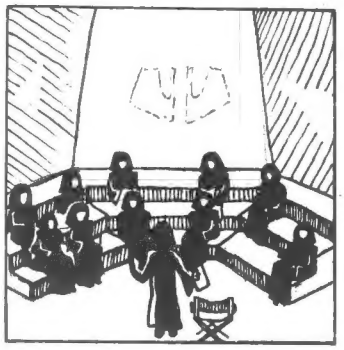
Director and Team

THE DIRECTOR Joining Date was in early August. Interviewed years later at fan conventions Graham Williams admitted he was not particularly fond of the this story - expressing a view that it was too jokey, its classical roots were a little too obvious, and that viewers might think the show was deliberately setting out to take *the Mickey*. He did, however, recognise a solid and workable script when he saw one, and thus felt confident applying his maxim of moulding experience with newcomer zeal.

Scottish Director Kenny McBain's only previous experience of *cult* TV had been **The Omega Factor** for BBC Scotland, a background he shared with both Graham Williams and Anthony Read. An upcoming and energetic figure, McBain had been looking around for some time for a suitable avenue to branch away from regional television and establish himself in the industry's mainstream. Through Graham Williams he found that avenue via Doctor Who, and thereafter went on to further directing assignments with **Mackenzie** before being appointed Producer of the very popular children's TV series **Grange Hill** in 1984. Two years later he was appointed Head of Drama at Tyne Tees Television, going on from there to produce early seasons of two highly acclaimed series, **Boon** and **Inspector Morse**. Kenny McBain died in the early 'Nineties.

McBain's aggressive and singular style as a Director did not sit too well with many of his cast and crew, a lot of whom expressed opinions that he went out of his way to put their backs up needlessly. The atmosphere throughout the production was tense, and some of this lack of cohesion was be reflected in the final product.

Williams' preference for a mixture of old-hands and novices continued at the technical level. THE HORNS OF NIMON was Set Designer Graeme Story's first **Doctor Who**. His previous background was in light entertainment. On the other hand June Hudson was making her third contribution this year, having impressed Graham Williams with her continued drive and enthusiasm for the show.



Handling the (somewhat curtailed) make-up requirements was Christine Walmsley-Cotham, whose only previous **Doctor Who** had been THE RIBOS OPERATION last year where she had worked alongside June Hudson. Handling Visual Effects was Peter Pegrum, a man who, ultimately, would end up managing the department following the retirement of Michaeljohn Harris. Although more an accomplished administrator than a Designer, Pegrum had worked on two previous **Doctor Whos**: THE TIME MONSTER, alongside Michaeljohn Harris in 1972, and HORROR OF FANG ROCK in 1977.

Accepting the limitations of the show's lack of budget, Kenny McBain also noted the serial's projected transmission schedule, over Christmas 1979, a factor which influenced his choice of Graham Crowden to play the deluded scientist Soldeed. He did not exactly want a Christmas pantomime, but felt there was sufficient wit and humour built into the script to justify the hiring of an actor no stranger to comedy.

Crowden was the only "big name" the serial could afford, although John Bailey, as Sezom in part four, had done one previous **Doctor Who**, THE EVIL OF THE DALEKS in 1967 where he had played Edward Waterfield, the doomed father of Victoria.

Two young names just starting in the profession, and destined for better things in the years to come, were Simon Gipps-Kent as Seth, and future **Blue Peter** presenter Janet Ellis as Teka. □

Set Design

THE LACK of budget for THE HORNS OF NIMON posed a big challenge to Designer Graeme Story. There were several major sets in NIMON; a spaceship, complete with flight-deck, companionways and hold areas, the Nimon complex with its maze of corridors leading to the main control area, the *larder*, the *dining room* and the transmat bay, Soldeed's laboratory, Skonnan council chambers, the portico to the maze, and yet more corridors, as well as a whole series of locations to represent the dying planet of Crinoth.

Story's solutions were quite ingenious. In the main he fell back on the Designer's number one escape route - when faced with lack of money, build the sets somewhat abstract in shape and make heavy use of black drapes and dark lighting to disguise the lack of distinct backgrounds. This was a standard theatre technique that television had picked up. The human eye and mind focuses on any emphasised structures in a set, a doorway, a support column, a large piece of machinery and fills in for itself imaginary backgrounds and a sense of scale.

Crinoth was all done this way. Redressing several of the Skonnan sets (particularly the spaceship) with different scenery flats, the emphasis was on packing the camera's perspective with as many foreground props as possible, thereby disguising the sets' lack of any real backgrounds. That said, the concourse outside the entrance to the Nimon's Power Complex, where the TARDIS lands, is an open area with large backdrop paintings of angry red skies on a cyclorama around the outside.

With *horns* the motif of this story, the Skonnan sets all used the triangle as their design focal point. Everything from airlock doors to the decorations in Soldeed's laboratory used the triangular horn emblem in some way. Costume and Visual Effects picked up on this too. The script references Skonnan uniforms as bearing the *Horns of Nimon* insignia, so sure enough, they all did. Likewise even the spacecraft was V-shaped in design - the engine struts making a delta out to the engine pods.

Inevitably, given the lack of money, there had to be a lot of compromise. Wherever possible set dressings had to come from stock held in the BBC. Vast banks of machinery and equipment were borrowed from BBC engineering stores to flesh out the Nimon complex and Soldeed's laboratory. Studded grey mailbox racks were pressed into service as wall flats, with all sizes of ducts and tubes splayed around the sets to give an impression of a civilisation well passed its prime.

Great use was made of square, metal forklift pallets to provide a harsh flooring for all the Skonnan sets, both on the planet and those aboard the spaceship. This produced a clanking sound whenever they were walked over, an effect which was sometimes enhanced during post-production with additional clanks to suggest a raw, unsophisticated technocracy.

A big compromise was the Nimon furnace, into which is fed the hymetusite tribute. Read's script imagined a giant tank-like affair with a set of hexagonal gates through which the crystals would be fed.

As each crystal gets digested, so the white hot radiation from the furnace increases, the light framing the Nimon into a grim silhouette as power levels rise. Unable to justify such an effect for so short a scene, Graeme Story had to settle for a simple revolving panel, the furnace glow above the hatchway added later by the Electronic Effects Designer in post-production.

One very imaginative solution was to the problem of the gateway into the Nimon complex. The script indicates the portal as a pair a tall gates which slide open on a signal from Soldeed's staff. Graeme Story opted for something more magical - something to suggest that here was a technology markedly different to that of the Skonnons. Thin ChromaKey-blue drapes were hung over the entranceway, tinted grey by the Vision Mixer whenever the portal was shut, and recoloured a fiery red when it was open. This also made for a more visually interesting effect as people passed through the gateway; seeming to vanish or appear in a visually interesting manner.

ChromaKey backcloths were also used over several window openings in the Skonnan city, so that views of the Nimon complex could be inlaid from the model set during recording.

The TARDIS interior was the only stock set. Unfortunately Graeme Story's lack of experience on **Doctor Who** led him to make one mistake. He allowed a section of the TARDIS wall flats to be erected the wrong way around, so that the roundels were raised into the set instead of sunk back from it. It was a mistake not spotted until after production had completed.

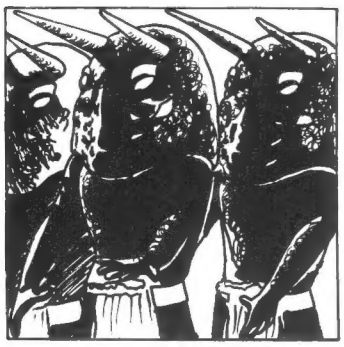
For the first time ever the TARDIS console was shown with its "glass" cylinder removed. To enhance this image of the ship stripped down yet still working Story had the console festooned at several points with lengths of disco lighting cable.

A major feature to nearly all the sets had to be an ability to withstand all the bangs and flashes called for in the script. The absence of film meant that all live action explosions had to be done in the studio, making THE HORNS OF NIMON one of the most demanding **Doctor Who** stories in years for pyrotechnics.

The Nimon travel pod was handled by the Design Department rather than Visual Effects, its entire construction being in the hands of Story's assistant, Rorie Mitchell.

All in all, Graeme Story was pleased with what he managed to achieve. In fact he has been quoted as saying he was better pleased with THE HORNS OF NIMON than with the other **Doctor Who** he worked on as Designer - WARRIORS' GATE. □

Nimons



INSPIRATION for the Nimons was, naturally enough, the Minotaur; a creature with the body of a man but the head and shoulders of a bull. Thinking more in science-fiction terms Anthony Read described the audience's first view of the creature thus in his script:

> *He is a terrifying creature, with huge powerful shoulders and a great glistening head like a huge mechanical bull. Two long pointed horns curve from either side of the beady eyes.*

The mechanical reference was meant to indicate a cyborg, Anthony Read subsequently explained. Each Nimon was part beast, part machine; explaining how it could fire rays from its horns.

June Hudson, however, preferred to take the Minotaur allusion more literally and her initial design sketches reveal a desire to do as realistic a melding between bull and man as possible.

The key problem was the head - how to give it the glistening leathery look of a real bull, and then to join it as seamlessly as possible to the torso of the human actor. June Hudson's search for suitable fabrics took her to Germany where she discovered a company, *Zeta Fabrics*, marketing a thin fake leather which had the tone and texture of sweaty bull hide. It was an expensive material to buy, but of all the departments, Costume had been given the biggest slice of the design budget.

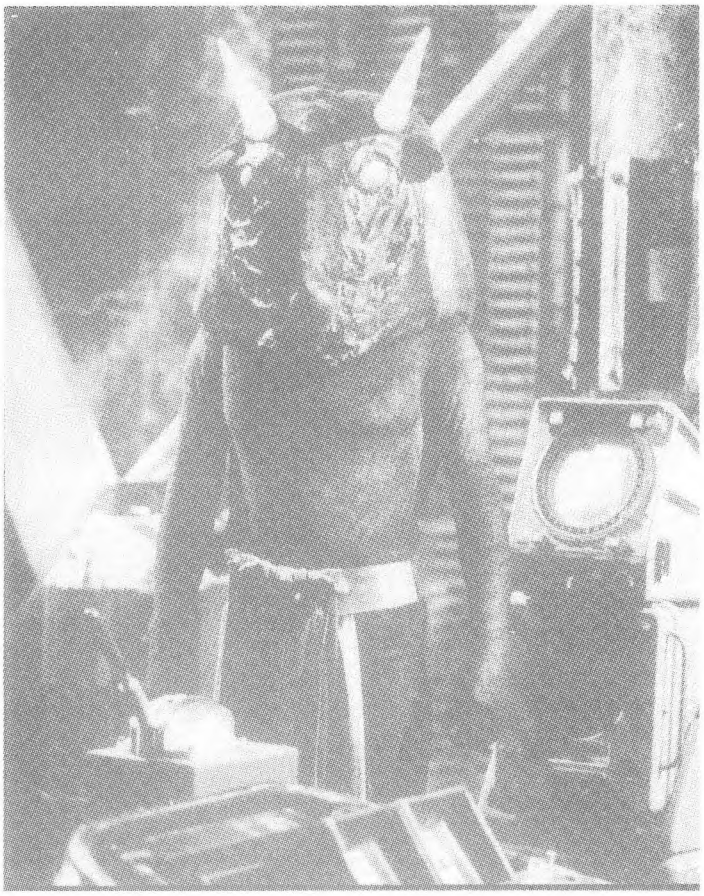
Working carefully to June Hudson's design her propmaker, Roger Oldhamstead, first of all sculpted a full size Nimon torso. From this he had cast three vacuum-formed fronts and backs which were then joined together and lined to give the frames extra strength. The Zeta fabric had to be carefully cut and stretched over the shells before additional painting and colourings were applied to complete the detailing, textures and tones. Small black-gauze covered apertures were cut into each mask between the eyes so that the actors could see out. Each mask was slightly different giving the Nimons individual characters - one, for example, has a chubbier face than the other two.

Once they were complete the masks were handed over to Visual Effects who fitted lights inside the hollow plastic horns Oldhamstead had fashioned. Batteries were fixed into the helmets and a wire run down through the spine so that the actor could actuate the lights by pressing a small switch concealed in his palm.

The body sections were off-the-peg body stockings coloured, with some help from the Make-up department, to match the masks. Velcro strips sewn into the body stockings provided anchoring points so that the masks could be fixed down sufficiently so that they would not wobble whenever the actors moved or lowered their heads to fire the horn rays. Gold sashes completed the three outfits, lending them the required classical Greek look.

The towering height of the Nimons was accomplished by fitting each artist with a pair of platform sandals with 12" lifts. June Hudson's idea was to make the feet look more like hooves. The sandals she chose, although light, had sufficiently curved arches to suggest this. At early production meetings it was suggested they should hire professional ballet dancers to play the Nimons. Wearing 12" platform sandals would make movement tremendously difficult if it wasn't to look "clumpy".

Kenny McBain's idea was to stylise and dehumanise the Nimons in an attempt to get away from their man-in-a-suit appearance. Ballet dancers had much better developed senses of balance and so could cope more easily with the high shoes. Even so a choreographer had to be hired for the dress rehearsals to show the artists precisely how to move. Graham Williams has been quoted as saying he felt the final result was unsuccessful. □



Make-up

ASIDE from helping to colour the Nimons, Make-up's role in this serial was fairly limited; a casualty of the show's low budget.

Christine Walmesley-Cotham's main responsibility was Soldeed. Picking up on Anthony Read's references to ancient Greek and Minoan civilisations, he was modelled very much along classical lines.

Crowden was fitted with a neatly cut, dark hairpiece, with any of his own, greying hair still visible coloured to match. A trim beard appliance completed the picture, with his skin given a slight olive tint to suggest a Mediterranean climate.

References to Sezom in the script describe him as a drawn and haggard version of Soldeed; similarly dressed as a priest-cum-scientist but looking much older partly as a consequence of realising what he has brought upon his world. Unable to resource a lengthy application of ageing techniques, Make-up had to settle for using just light and dark shadowing, built up over a white foundation, to give Sezom his lined and weary appearance. A turban-like head-dress avoided the need for any complex hair work.

The Anethans should have been as olive-skinned as their Skonnan neighbours. Indeed the storyline specifically describes Seth as being dark and tanned. However, due again to restrictions on casting and make-up, none of the artists playing Anethans were given very much in the way of skin re-toning. □

Visual Effects

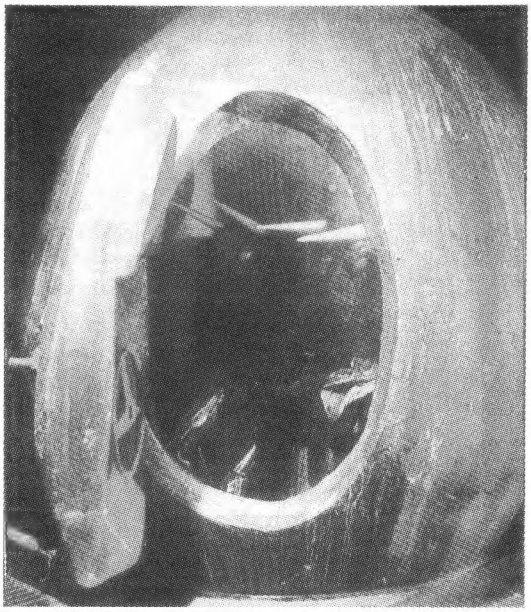
DESPITE its modest budget THE HORNS OF NIMON did end up with quite a high Effects overhead, mainly in the areas of miniatures and pyrotechnics.

All the explosion scenes, bar one, needed to be done in the recording studio. Although the electrically detonated charges used were safe from a fire risk point of view, because artists were frequently involved each scene had to be carefully walked through and rehearsed which, in turn, meant scenes took longer to shoot than normal.

The end result was the show racing through the non-effects based scenes as quickly as possible - recording the bulk of most scenes with just one take.

Adding to this tight schedule was the modelwork overhead. With no initial provision for film, all the models also had to be shot to be done in the recording studio. As always the Director time-tabled the modelwork as the last item in the recording running orders, although Kenny McBain did agree to set aside an evening in block one (the second day) to do most of the shooting so that, if necessary, any scenes not captured that day could be rescheduled for block two

Modelwork was split into two main areas of planning; the spaceship sequences (mostly for part one) and the establishing shots of the Nimon complex. The Skonnan freighter was a three-foot model built at the BBC effects workshop by one of Peter Pegrum's assistants. Instead of "Scotchlite" material and FAP, used



in NIGHTMARE OF EDEN (see last issue) the engine nacelles had ChromaKey blue fabric glued into them so that a red engine glow could be added by the Vision Mixer during recording.

The budget would not run to two models, and time would not permit delays for repainting. Thus one key point in the script got lost. During the closing scenes in episode four the Doctor tells Romana of his good sense in reminding Seth to paint the ship white for its return voyage to Aneth - thereby heralding news of his triumph to Seth's father. The ship, however, remained white throughout the story.

A motorised turntable, supporting a pivot, was provided so that the ship, and the asteroid, could be shown rotating, or even spinning, on cue. The TARDIS, as always, was flown on a wire, although as Pegrum was not used to **Doctor Who**, he neglected to set it spinning while in flight.

For the close-up shots of the TARDIS jammed against the freighter's hull, a separate enlarged section of the ship was built to scale with the police box model. This was a working prop with a small airlock door that could be manually opened and shut.

Inevitably modelwork became a casualty of the breakneck speed with which non-technical scenes were recorded. Graham Williams was not happy to sanction any overtime and so any scenes that were not strictly necessary got dropped. Several establishing shots of the ship were dropped, including one sequence showing small meteorites bumping against its hull, and one mixed-feed ChromaKey shot of the Doctor walking up through the force-tunnel back to the TARDIS.

The other principal modelwork was of the Nimon complex. This was a large tabletop model, big enough to be shot from low angles so that views of the main tower could be matted into the live action using ChromaKey. Sadly Peter Pegrum's model of the Nimon complex omitted one crucial detail - nowhere was the adjacent Skonnan city visible.

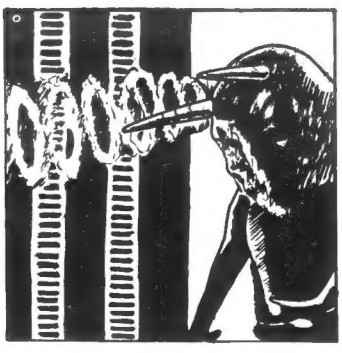
The destruction of the Nimon complex was judged a key scene. Wanting this to look effective Pegrum won permission to do this one sequence on film, using a high speed camera at the Visual Effects Workshop's own model stage at Western Avenue.

Physical effects in the studio included various explosions (many in the TARDIS) and the smoke discharged from Skonnon guards' guns when they fired. This was then augmented by an electronic effects beam added in post-production.

One other key physical effect was the *dining room* sequence where the Anethans witness the fate of their predecessors - drained of their life-forces and reduced to husks.

The husk was an Anethan costume on a frame with plaster hands and head. The head was built up with a very thin layer of plaster over an inflated air bladder. As the bladder was deflated on cue, so the weight of the dry plaster caused it to collapse inwards. □

Electronic Effects



ONLY ONE gallery day was needed in November to complete the effects for this story. The TARDIS "cricket ball" shot was completed with the addition of a red glow, and all the various beams were added to shots of the Nimon firing its horn rays.

One effect not produced by the Electronic Effects Designer was the red glow suffusing the Nimon complex as the Anethans race to find a way out of the Nimon complex before it explodes. For some reason this task was given to the Vision Mixer to accomplish, who did it simply by switching red on and off into the VT recorded picture.

The most complex sequences to do were the those featuring the TARDIS force-wall. The ChromaKey work, blending long shots of the Doctor, Romana and K-9 with the airlock miniature, had all been done on day two of block two. Dave Jervis' responsibility was to add the shimmering corridor - an effect requiring the EMIBOX (see last issue) to create the desired shape and wipes.

Jervis also oversaw the re-recording of those scenes aboard the freighter where the increased gravity causes sound and visual disorientation to occur. This entailed copying the scenes through a *Quantel*, and then editing out a certain number of frames per second to give the output picture a juddery look. □

Dressed to Thrill

JUNE HUDSON worked extensively as a BBC Costume Designer on *DOCTOR WHO* towards the end of Tom Baker's tenure. She took time out to talk with *IN-VISION* about the problems and pressures of working on *DOCTOR WHO*'s seventeenth season.

"THE SECRET of doing science-fiction aliens is knowing how to balance what you want to do versus what you are able to do, limited by the size of your budget and the shape of the human form"

Although appearing an obvious statement, June Hudson is quick to point out that doing science-fiction is actually anything but easy. Costuming for series like **Doctor Who** and **Blake's Seven** demands some very special disciplines and is a path frought with risks and difficulties all the way.

"Quite a number of Costume Designers fall into the trap of thinking all you have to do is something terribly way out and you're home and dry. Doing science-fiction isn't merely a case of painting a motor bike helmet silver or running up a very colourful, but highly impractical, outfit. In the first place you have to design based around what you can see in the script. Secondly you have to design for the actor or actress cast to play those roles. Thirdly, and this is where you can fall down, you have to think out the practicalities of each costume to ensure they will be believable.

"As an example, look at a shirt. Like a shark, the shirt is a perfect design. No matter how Costume Designers have tried to change the direction of men's fashions the basic idea of the shirt remains the same. Women will generally put up with a high degree of discomfort in order to look glamourous or appealing, but men won't - which is why you will never see a man's shirt that does up at the back.

"When I was asked to redesign the Doctor's outfit for THE LEISURE HIVE I did any number of sketches trying to envisage something new and imaginative in place of his old white shirt. The Producer of that show, John Nathan-Turner, wanted to investigate the marketing angle of a **Doctor Who** shirt, so he asked me if I could come up with something totally new. I did come up with the notion of the double lapels, but at the end of the day a shirt has to be a shirt if you want people to believe it is something a man would wear; even if that man is the Doctor. He has to be believable within the context of a drama. I'm not guilty of putting the question marks on Tom's lapels. That was part of the idea to make a recognisable **Doctor Who** shirt that could be sold in shops. To me those questions marks looked somewhat theatrical; a costume rather than clothes. The Doctor needs to be dressed distinctively, but it must still be practical if you want your audience to believe in him. It's one of the reasons I dislike that outfit they put poor Colin Baker into. You just cannot believe in a man who would dress like that..."

"Lalla Ward is a good illustration of the earlier point about designing for the actor or actress. I had never met her before I did THE CREATURE FROM THE PIT, although I knew of her. She is, after all, the Honourable Sarah Ward, daughter of Lord and Lady Bangor, so the aristocratic image is there, both as Lalla Ward and as Romana.

"Mary Tamm had created the character of Romana, but we all knew that Lalla wanted to play the part very differently. Mary was naturally very elegant and aloof. Lalla wasn't. She was a more delicate, fairy-like figure; very girlish, very feminine, vulnerable and eye-catching.

"My perception of the script for THE CREATURE FROM THE PIT was that Romana would stand out more if we built on those qualtities. Taking into account the practicalities of the story you had to design the costumes in relation to everything else. There had to be contrast to what was going on around her. All the way through she was going to be surrounded by toughies, she was going to be tied up and put in danger. It was importamt therefore that she didn't look tough. In the end, of course, she is shown to be every bit as smart and resourceful as the Doctor, but the contrast is that she doesn't look it, which is why I went for the pale, pretty girlish colours. Also, from a strictly design point-of-view, it worked because she stood out against the green background of the sets and all the hard, harsh reds and blacks of the other characters.

"I understand Lalla said she didn't care much for that costume, which is a fair criticism, although visually and design-wise it does work as far as the camera and the script is concerned; which ultimately is what a Costume Designer is paid to worry about. However, when Lalla and I next got together, on the Dalek story, we were able to sit down and work out details of a costume for her at a much earlier stage. In fact, as I recall, we worked out the impression of her costume being a parody of the Doctor's, and then it was added in to the script. I think we had part of a morning to do this, most of which was spent trying on outfits with me doing little sketches and letting Lalla pick out those elements she liked.

"Even here, you had to keep the practical arguments in mind all the time as well. I knew we had a script where the Doctor and Romana come up against robots, so it was important to avoid clothing Lalla in anything that was bodyline if you wanted to maintain that essential contrast whereby she and Tom do not look like the aliens. It is tricky because the two of them do themselves come from another planet and another age but, unless it is scripted, your job, as well as the writer's in the first place, is to ensure they stand out and apart from the other aliens in the story.

"The Movellans were a total contrast to the Doctor and Romana. They were thoroughly bodyline and it was a great joy to design for them. You were working with people like Suzanne Danielle who had been cast specifically because of her beautiful athletic figure and the way she moved. So she had to be in something form-fitting with a kind of revealing quality, but not overtly sexy. After all, they were robots. What you had to avoid was anything hanging off the costume - no frilly bits. She is metal albeit a machine turned technical delight. If you think of a machine you tend to think of something that is finely turned;

the angles and the look are lovely but everything is symmetrical. You don't get that uneven, lop-sided look of a human face.

"The head-dresses were created by Make-up using silver thread although I did help the Designer to do them. If there's one memory of that story which sticks with me, it's that first morning when we were all travelling down to the location in a minibus; every one of us platting away like lunatics trying to get these head-dresses done.

"One of the things I've fought eternally to get away from is the motor bike helmet. The trouble is you can use them on extras in the background and they are great for getting a cheap, uniform look which hides both the face and the hairstyle so you don't need to bother with any expensive and time-consuming make-up work. The BBC Costume department has whole racks of motor cycle helmets in stock precisely for this purpose. But you cannot use them for principal actors and actresses. They do not work in close-up, they are difficult to use as part of a performance and you lose an actor's individuality - which is probably why you spent money casting him or her in the first place. To have put someone like Suzanne Danielle into a motor bike helmet would have been to lose her looks - everything about her which needs to be up-front on camera."

One of the first things June Hudson did on gaining her position as **Doctor Who**'s semi-permanent Costume Designer was to have the Doctor's costume fully cleaned and repaired, even the boots. It was a move which endeared her to the show's star, and which led ultimately to all the **Doctor Who** costumes getting tagged, catalogued and grouped together on rails so that they could be easily identified.

"To me it seemed obvious. If you have a leading actor then naturally you ensure his clothes are cleaned and looked after. Apparently though, this had not been the case. Most of my predecessors did not regard **Doctor Who** as a show they wanted to stay with and so did not give it the care and attention it deserved. Me, I was thrilled to be doing **Doctor Who** and, in fact, had asked to be put on the programme, much to the surprise of my department manager. I had done **Blake's Seven** and **Spaceships of the Mind** in 1978, but throughout most of 1979 I had been working predominantly on a succession of modern dress dramas, which were fun but not very technically demanding.

"At the time that I joined the show it did not occur to me that it was within my brief to change the Doctor's costume. To me Tom had his image and that was it. It was the silhouette of the hat, the coat and the scarf which had, after all, made him famous and a national figure on television. To have tampered with that would have required a very big decision which I alone would not have been prepared to take. Even when it did come the following year, when John Nathan-Turner wanted a change, I fought tooth and nail to retain Tom's set image. He had done **Doctor Who** for so long that the scarf was his image. It would have caused any amount of confusion to try and change it. You would run a serious risk of losing audience acceptance if the lead actor suddenly, and for no apparent reason, suddenly underwent a total change of image. Tom's silhouette was of great value to the programme, especially when in every serial you were changing the aliens' costumes, Lalla's costume, even the extras' costumes. Tom's image was the one constant that kept the show visually in balance."

Graham Williams was a graet believer in trying to put all his money up-front for the camera, which is why Costumes tended to get a lion's share of whatever budget was available. But as the 1979 recording year drew to a close the task became ever harder to accomplish effectively. Consequently THE HORNS OF NIMON required June Hudson to pull out aLL the stops using meagre resources to design something eye-catching. But does she feel she was successful?

" T h e Nimons weren't that well received, were they? The problem was they had to look like bulls. That was a key note in the script. A bull, by definition, is top heavy - a massive head and huge shoulders which taper down to, really, quite tiny little feet. So whatever road you followed, you were bound to end up with a tall human body supporting this great head with huge horns. Another directive in the script, as I recall, was they had to be tall and frightening so they would literally tower above and menace the rest of the cast. Hence why I gave them the ten-inch lifts, which were speecially made for the Nimons. Firstly to give them the necessary height, and secondly to give them feet which would look like hooves. But I did also want them to look slightly noble looking which is why I gave them Egyptian style aprons, which also helped to differentiate them apart from the other civilisation which was based more on the classical Greeks. I think given the time and the money we had, we did pretty well.

"Roger Oldhamstead, my main costume and prop maker, trained for over twelve years in the Royal Opera House where he developed a great skill in making lightweight costumes look very heavy, complicated and sumptuous. So for Graham Crowden's outfit we used the cheapest nylon satin we could find in Berwick Street, the cheapest lining we could buy, and then by foam backing and quilting it we got back something that looked wonderful. It caught the light perfectly, giving it a rich and heavy looking lustre. The foam backing made it look heavy, and the quilting gave it the impression of a much richer fabric than it was. For his costume underneath the robes we gave him an off-the-peg Indian sari laid on top of a cheap, gold-covered tissue, again from Berwick Street. This again was sandwiched with foam backing and quilted, giving us yet another amazing looking fabric.

"Sorak was my favourite from that story. Here we used exactly the same technique of foam backing and quilting a very cheap, black fabric, but because this foam backing gave you a degree of rigidity to the final fabric, it was possible literally to cut out tangents of material, bend them and fix them directly onto the jacket. Again we were creating something that looked amazing on camera but which cost very little money.

"Designing for science-fiction is not something that is in everyone's blood. I firmly believe you have to have a care and an enthusiasm for it before you start, and an interest in the medium as a whole. **Doctor Who** is not the biggest production I've ever worked on, but it is certainly one of the most challenging and, to me personally, one of the most enjoyable." □

Studio Recording

CAST AND CREW assembled for the first three day recording block on Monday 24th September in studio TC3, one of the larger studios at Television Centre. This was so that the biggest set, the city on Skonnos, could be shot. McBain's policy was to record all the scenes which needed large numbers of extras first, so that they could be dispensed with (and paid off) as soon as their scenes were finished. Days one and two therefore featured the largest casts, including all the extras playing Skonnans and Anethans.

Early scenes recorded included the police box prop. This had been hired only the previous weekend by the Den*nis Allen Print* company for an exterior photo-shoot with Tom Baker. The product was a set of children's greeting and birthday cards, many of which would represent the child's age as a number written in chalk on the front of the police box. However, such was the age and condition of the wood on the police box that, once scrawled on, it was hard to remove the chalk numbers afterwards. In several of the scenes recorded on days one and two the chalk marks, plus the hasty attempts to rub them off, are clearly visible.

The Skonnan exteriors and interiors were linked sets, enabling a few scenes to be done side-by-side. For instance the main atrium set has a corridor leading off from it which, in turn, leads to Soldeed's laboratory.

On day two, as shooting on the Skonnan sets wound down, so the lights and cameras shifted over to the Nimon complex interiors, which took up the remainder of the time on days two and three. A BBC photocall was held on the Wednesday as this was the first date the actors playing Nimons would be seen in costume.

Haste became the order of the day on day three as the need to safeguard pyrotechnic scenes led to inevitable delays. One of the last bits of live-action footage to be recorded on day three was Soldeed's death. Thinking it was a dry run, Graham Crowden overplayed the scene, dissolving into laughter at the end of the take. Only then did he realise it had been a live recording.

Model shooting finished off block one although the inevitable over-runs delayed starting on these scenes, and as a result several of the spaceship sequences had to be deleted. They did, however, manage to complete the most demanding miniature shot: the TARDIS cric*ket ball* sequence as a spinning rostrum camera graphic of the police box is cued to bounce off the rotating asteroid model.

Block two went ahead a week and a half later, Sunday 7th through Tuesday 9th October 1979 in the smaller confines of studio TC6. Day one was scheduled to complete all the Skonnan and Nimon complex corridor scenes. The Nimon *larder* scenes were concluded here too so that those remaining extras required to play paralysed Anethans would only be needed for one day.

An unplanned mishap went through without being spotted during the co-pilot's death scene at the end of episode two. As he collapsed to the floor, dead, his costume ripped at the seat of his trousers, revealing to the audience that Skonnan underwear is very much like Earth's.

Day two concentrated on all the scenes aboard the Skonnan freighter. There was a lot to get through but Graeme Story had once again made the process easier by linking together the hold, the companionway and the flight deck sets. Although equipped with a five-camera set-up, Kenny McBain's preference was to run with just three cameras whenever possible - directing them to move quickly between sets if at all possible so that the action could be kept going. Several scenes in day two were done this way.

October 8th was the only day in the studio for actor Bob Hornery, playing the spaceship's senior pilot.

One ad-lib approved by the Director was the co-pilot's constant haranguing of his Anethan prisoners. Although the phrase "Weakling scum!" is in the script, it is said far more than was written.

John Bailey's only day in the studio was day three, for which all the Crinoth sets were erected - mostly by cannibalising and redressing previously-used sets. Tom Baker's only scenes this day were those aboard the TARDIS.

Keen as always to put across his own ad-libs, Baker got permission to add three further unscripted sequences. These were K-9 buried beneath a pile of ticker-tape, his mouth-to-mouth resuscitation by the Doctor, and his rosette for best of breed. □

Music

ALTHOUGH he did not know it at the time, THE HORNS OF NIMON was to be Dudley Simpson's final incidental music assignment for **Doctor Who**. Although he was down to do SHADA, its cancellation after losing the third recording block meant he was never called in even to begin writing any music (see next issue).

Interviewed years later Simpson regards this period as a sad epitaph to his long association with the show (which started back in 1964). He was given no notification that his services would not be required in 1980, his contract for SHADA was never ratified so he received no payment, and to top matters off he did not enjoy working with Kenny McBain; expressing a view that he deliberately went out of the way to "get his back up".

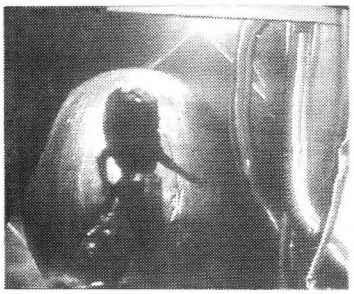
The result was a very lack-lustre score for THE HORNS OF NIMON, in places very reminiscent of other of Simpson's scores. In particular there are passages almost lifted from CITY OF DEATH - for example, the sequence as the Doctor first wanders through the Nimon's Power Complex. Another notable musical reference is a hint of the *Wedding March* as the Doctor and Romana watch Seth and Teka's ship on the scanner at the end of the story. □

Part 1:
Opening Music (Ron Grainer and BBC Radiophonic Workshop): 28"
Closing Music (Ron Grainer and BBC Radiophonic Workshop): 54"
Incidental Music (Dudley Simpson): 8'51"

Part 2:
Opening Music (Ron Grainer and BBC Radiophonic Workshop): 32"
Closing Music (Ron Grainer and BBC Radiophonic Workshop): 52"
Incidental Music (Dudley Simpson): 5'50"

Part 3:
Opening Music (Ron Grainer and BBC Radiophonic Workshop): 28"
Closing Music (Ron Grainer and BBC Radiophonic Workshop): 52"
Incidental Music (Dudley Simpson): 3'24"

Part 4:
Opening Music (Ron Grainer and BBC Radiophonic Workshop): 28"
Closing Music (Ron Grainer and BBC Radiophonic Workshop): 52"
Incidental Music (Dudley Simpson): 11'24" (individual cues: 35", 35", 4", 30", 20", 12", 1'20", 30", 40", 30", 5", 1'45", 8", 10", 30", 8", 10", 35", 8", 40", 1'00", 5", 15", 29")



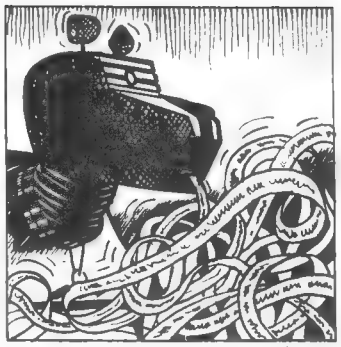
Special Sound

SPECIAL SOUND was, as usual, handled by Dick Mills. He completed the heavy gravity scenes by running the voice soundtrack through a ring modulator to break up the sounds and make them more stuttery.

The Nimon voices were a combination of vocal artistry and Radiophonic post-production. Radio actor Clifford Norgate supplied all the Nimon voices, achieving their throaty tones and roars by dint of his own ability. All the Dick Mills had to do was overlay an additional Radiophonic warble whenever the creatures spoke.

Mills does own up to adding some of the *Bloodnok's Stomach* sound effects (created by Desmond Briscoe for **The Goon Show** in the Fifties) to the sequence of the TARDIS console exploding just after the Doctor is sure he has repaired it. Again, however, he points to Kenny McBain's desire to inject some laughs as the motivation behind it. □

Trivia



FOR THE "cricket ball" sequence" a revolving lens was fitted to camera one so that the TARDIS interior too could be made to spin as the ship hits and bounces away from the planetoid.

The small planet itself is, according to K-9's readings, 220 million tons in weight and 96.4 kilometres in diameter. It approaches at mach 9.3.

The model sequences of the Skonnan spaceship are unusual in that there are no stars in the background. This was a conscious decision to speed up the time it would take to shoot each sequence, there being fewer picture elements requiring lining-up and co-ordination.

The spaceship itself actually travelled, like the *Liberator*, in the opposite direction to that suggested by its shape. The single engine unit was at the rear, and the two prongs of its 'V' shape were at the front.

The horns on the roof of the Nimon's Power Complex are actually antennae transmitting energy (presumably to build the black hole). The Complex itself is a giant positronic circuit.

The Co-pilot is unnamed in the televised serial, but in Terrance Dicks' novelisation he is named as Sardor. The captain is named in the book as Sekkoth.

Skonnos, in the old days, had an empire which K-9 described as: "military dictatorship extended over 100 star systems - lost in civil war." We learn later that after the civil war, only the military survived. Given this evidence Romana describes the civil war as being extremely well run.

Aneth is close to Skonnos, but between the two there is a dog-leg round sector L75. It is this stage of the journey which the Co-pilot tries to avoid.

The hemispherical defence zone round the Nimon's Power Complex has a strength of 7,300 megazones.

On Crinoth - the Nimons' previous conquest, Sezom discovered that Jasonite could enhance the power of the staff the Nimon gave him to a point where it can stun them. Jasonite is a rock which carries a powerful electro-magnetic charge.

At the end of the story, Sorak is left in charge of Skonnos, although the Doctor is not convinced this will make the Skonnons a better people.

Lalla Ward claims she suggested the riding outfit she wore in this story, and names it as one of her favourites. She wanted the colour red to be predominant so as to incite the bull (the Nimon) to anger.

Sorak's costume, because of the shape of its sleeves, was nicknamed *Sydney Opera House* by the cast.

For the first time in **Doctor Who** history, an acknowledgement of the **Star Trek** universe is made. In part two the Doctor bemoans to a group of Skonnan guards how fed up he is with heavies pointing guns or blasters or *phasers* at him.

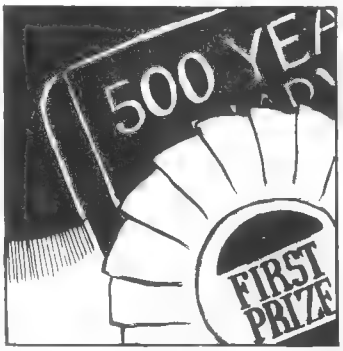
At the end of the story the Doctor remarks "Come along, old girl - quite a few millennia left in you yet." Romana thanks him, but it transpires the Doctor is actually talking to the TARDIS. □

Continuity

THE DOCTOR is once again trying to repair the TARDIS when the story opens. He wishes to make a slight modification to the Conceptual Geometer. He has disconnected the Conceptual Geometer and the Dematerialisation Circuits. Another casualty of the Doctor's attempted repairs is the Dimensional Stabiliser which is "fused." The Gravitic Anomaliser is still working however, and the Doctor uses it to help repair the Skonnan ship.

We discover that the defence shield on the TARDIS door is on a different circuit to the others. When the door is open there is a black void outside. The Doctor, Romana and K-9 turn immediately left when they leave the TARDIS into the void.

When K-9 watches Soldeed and Sorak on the TARDIS scanner, the picture is shot from



above suggesting (not for the first time) that the TARDIS scanner is in the Police Box's light.

When Soldeed shoots K-9 with his staff, K-9 glows red and stops. According to Terrance Dicks' novelisation, he is stunned by Soldeed's ray, and closes himself down temporarily for self-regeneration

Romana has made her own Sonic Screwdriver for this story (although it is not clear whether she ever recovers it from the flight deck of the Skonnan ship). The Doctor diagnoses it as "not bad, a bit basic, though" but this does not stop him attempting to switch it for his own.

The Doctor claims to have been to Aneth - "but not yet."

When K-9 gets damaged in the TARDIS, his head twists upside down and the Doctor gives him the kiss of life. Twisting K-9's head back to its correct, upright position makes an unpleasant grating noise (courtesy of Dick Mills). □

Transmission

WITH NO break scheduled for the Christmas period, THE HORNS OF NIMON went out over four consecutive Saturdays between December 22nd and January 12th. At the end of episode four no mention was made about the loss of SHADA or the shortening of the season. A perfunctory announcement merely stated that the show would return later in the year.

Aside from repeats and news magazine features part four was the last **Doctor Who** episode to feature the Bernard Lodge title graphics and an arrangement of the original Delia Derbyshire interpretation of the **Doctor Who** theme music. The diamond logo too made its final appearance, as least insofar as the television serial was concerned.

In terms of *live* television (as opposed to pre-recorded video) it was the final outing for Tom Baker's multi-coloured scarf and brown tweed coat.

Similarly David Brierly said his final words as K-9 to a BBC 1 audience.

The story was first screened in Australia on March 6th 1980. □

Cuts

EVEN WITH all the scenes that had been dropped for time reasons during production, THE HORNS OF NIMON still worked out as a very long story. Despite having titles, credits and reprises chopped out, the US TV movie version still ran to 1 hour 34 minutes.

Parts one and four suffered the most over-running. In the former instance several scenes with the Anethans in the hold reacting to events had to be chopped, as was part of the Pilot's introductory scene.

Another casualty in the editing suite was an amusing exchange between Romana and the co-pilot in part one:

> **Romana**: I thought the Doctor asked you to bring the crystals.
> **Co-Pilot**: Me? I'm a Skonnian, not a porter!
> **Romana**: I see, and if you're a Skonnian, the Universe owes you a living?
> **Co-Pilot:** So the Nimon has promised.
> **Romana**: Has he indeed?

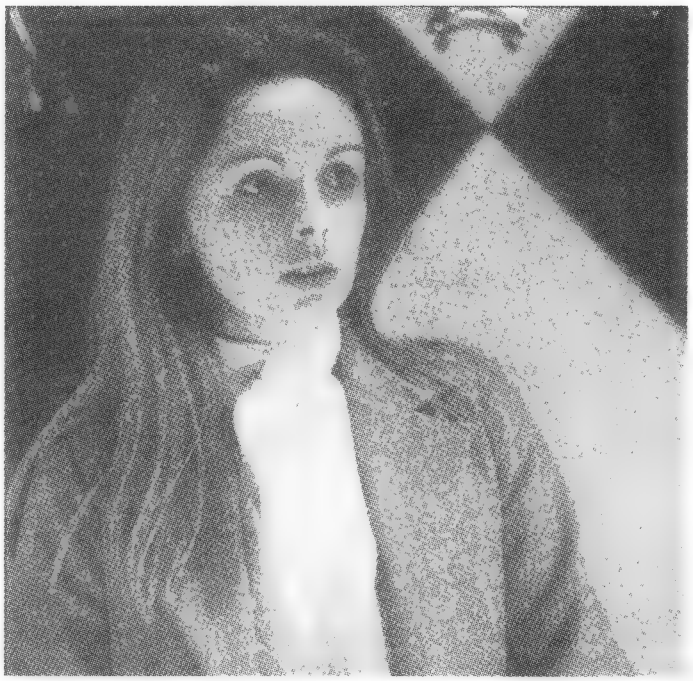
Editing part four was much harder, simply because so much more crucial action takes place. In the event Graham Williams had to seek permission for the episode to over-run its scheduled 25-minute slot by a couple of minutes. As a result, part four was allowed one of the few half-hour slots **Doctor Who** has ever been allocated.

One cut was made to part four, at director Kenny McBain's insistence. It is described by Tom Baker in **The Tom Baker Years** video:

"We put in a line, I remember, from *The White Devil* at the death speech of Soldeed: 'I have caught an everlasting cold,' which is from Webster's *The White Devil*. And Graham [Crowden] overplayed it and Kenny McBain, I think, the director insisted we cut it, and I regretted it very much - it was a wonderful, wonderful moment."

Simple Nimon

JUSTIN RICHARDS assesses the production and story of THE HORNS OF NIMON in an attempt to account for its notoriety



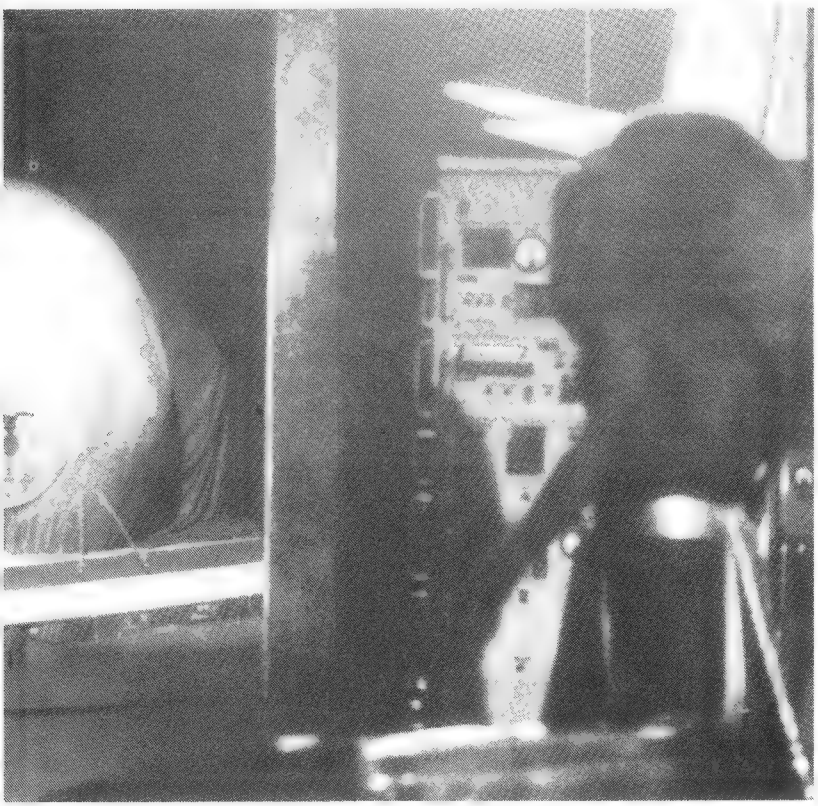
THE HORNS OF NIMON is widely regarded as the worst **Doctor Who** story ever made. This is quite a hurdle to get over in any supposedly objective evaluation of its four episodes. The rest of this issue discusses the process of production for the story - the problems, particularly financial ones, and how they influenced and affected the creation and realisation of the scripts. But despite the effort and talent which was lavished on this parsimonious serial, the end result must be deemed one of the failures of the Whoniverse.

Actually, in terms of audience acceptance, as opposed to fan reaction, there is no question that THE HORNS OF NIMON was a successful **Doctor Who**, as ***Audience*** makes clear. And the people who worked on the story seem at worst indifferent: Tom Baker talks quite animatedly about it in **The Tom Baker Years** video and describes the story as "very enjoyable;" Designer Graeme Story remembers his work for this production more fondly than his association with the *classic* WARRIORS' GATE, his other contribution to **Who**.

Part of the acceptance problem (and an obvious contributor to the financial burdens) was the fact that THE HORNS OF NIMON was never intended to end the seventeenth season of **Doctor Who**. The money and to an extent the creativity was being held back for SHADA - the finale not just to the season, but to Graham Williams' years as Producer and Douglas Adams' contributions as Script Editor. There is no doubt that SHADA was much higher in the regular production team's agenda, Adams actually writing it (in a hurry, as ever), and Williams already budgeting for night filming (to be written off because of industrial action - an indication of the story's eventual fate).

It is no secret that Douglas Adams did less work on NIMON than on any other story he edited. If this was not a documented fact, it is apparent anyway from the script. The story lacks much the wit and panache of the dialogue of, say, CITY OF DEATH or THE CREATURE FROM THE PIT. This in itself is not a problem. Indeed, without the usual level of initial prompting from Adams - because Anthony Read was both competent and experienced at writing **Who** scenarios - the story is quite straightforward fare. Adams had tinkered with Terry Nation's DESTINY OF THE DALEKS partly to reduce the production costs and probably also out of the sense of novelty because it was his first real assignment (although he did most of the editing on THE ARMAGEDDON FACTOR). Changing requirements and personal problems for David Fisher had led to Adams having to handle the complete rewrite of CITY OF DEATH, while THE CREATURE FROM THE PIT also needed extensive work. Only with NIGHTMARE OF EDEN, the basic plot of which lent itself to Adams' enhancements to Bob Baker's already witty and strong writing, and THE HORNS OF NIMON got little rework.

The result was that inexperienced director Kenny McBain got a good basic storyline and script, precious little money, hardly any time in the studio given the amount of work needed, and a cast acclimatised to the off-the-wall ideas and witty dialogue.



In season seventeen Tom Baker was on a high. He was getting the focus and dialogue he wanted and working with an actress he was growing to respect and like. And when Williams and Adams had the time and took the care to provide the material, he excelled. The faults of the other stories of season seventeen are largely nothing to do with Baker (with the notable exception of his "my arms, my legs, my everything" scene in EDEN). And then suddenly, while at his peak, he was expected to cope with the rather drab HORNS OF NIMON.

The script offered Baker little potential, but what there was he milked for everything it was worth, and what there wasn't he often added (the rosette and kiss of life for K-9, for example). It is hardly surprising that Baker's memories of the story are of a script addition he was not allowed to get away with (the insertion of Webster's line "I have caught an everlasting cold" from *The White Devil* to Soldeed's death speech - see ***Cuts*** on page 11) and the costumes which were in June Hudson's immediately recognisable style - described by Baker as having "a marvellous, mad operatic quality."

Given Baker's lead, the rest of the cast rose to it to the best of their abilities. For the less experienced artists like Janet Ellis, Simon Gipps-Kent and Michael Osborne this was not at all. But Malcolm Terris and Graham Crowden relished the chance to contribute in the style they had seen was becoming appropriate to **Doctor Who**. Their remembered excesses are largely accidents - Terris's underpants becoming visible as he dies; Crowden's manic death rattle on what he thought was a rehearsal - the pressure of studio time allowing no time for correction.

Without sufficient input from Adams, the result was that the presentation (and in particular the performances) were inappropriate to the story. The whole of CITY OF DEATH had been written for exaggerated archetypes - the resolution depended on Dugan's cliched and predictable response to arch-villain and misunderstood alien Scaroth. But THE HORNS OF NIMON was a good solid story with 'real' two-dimensional characters, and the excesses of the actors' performances failed to interpret the rather ordinary (in season seventeen terms) plot with any degree of credibility. The form is at odds with the content. Even the post-production work seems to exacerbate this - Dick Mills' addition of the *Bloodnok's Stomach* sound effect from **The Goons** was one he deemed appropriate to the tone and performances of the otherwise *finished* piece.

To be fair, the performances are for the most part competent and appropriate. But there are (too many) moments and sequences where Crowden, Terris and Baker go over the top. And this is the crux of the problem. If we examine the other elements of the production, we find that they are for the most part adequate - sometimes even better, although they suffer from the same diversity of intent. It is this dichotomy that at once

makes us uneasy with the story and robs us of some of the nuances of the characters implied in the script (brought out in Terrance Dicks' novelisation and examined in the character studies on page 3).

The Nimon themselves are not the most convincing of **Who** monsters. But they are far from the worst to grace the series, and are a vast improvement over the muppet-like Mandrels of the previous story. Their motivation as galactic locusts, and their modus operandi are convincing. Their Great Journey of Life is well described and illustrated by Romana's brief excursion to their previous victim planet, Crinoth. When the time is taken to light and shoot them properly, they are actually quite impressive - witness the sequences in part four as they stride through the Power Complex, shot in close-up from below and illuminated by the flashing red of the emergency lighting.

The plot has no obvious holes and the script is more than competent. What humour there is adds sophistication - the Doctor tells the Skonnon guards to "Take me to your leader," at once realising his situation and acknowledging the cliched nature of it - an enhancement rather than a detraction. Similarly, Romana remarks on how appropriate it is that the insecure personality of the Nimon resides in a Power Complex. Moments more in the style of the previous season than this one - not surprisingly.

John Tulloch & Manuel Alvarado in *Dr Who: The Unfolding Text* (pp.145-6) say that Anthony Read felt that the classical allusions did not spoil the story for those who didn't recognise the underlying myth, but added something extra for those who did. This is probably true. Certainly there is no attempt to hide the source for the basic story. But for the initiated, there are references more subtle than the plain retelling of the story. The Doctor explicitly refers to the original myth by remarking that he is glad he remembered to tell Seth to repaint his ship before setting off for home (relating to the importance attached to the colour of the sails on Theseus' returning ship in the Minotaur story). Indeed, in Dicks' novelisation the Doctor refers back to his argument with K-9 (in UNDERWORLD) that classical myths may be prophesies rather than histories.

Some of the references are more subtle though. Anagrams are used to delineate the roles of the characters: Seth is Theseus; Aneth is Athens; Skonnos is Knossos (where the Labyrinth was), Soldeed is Dædalus (who built the labyrinth), the Nimon is the Minotaur. Some of the allusions are less clear cut however - Jasonite is obviously drawing on Jason's reputation as a warrior and is part of the story's resolution (perhaps another back-reference to Read's first story as Script Editor, UNDERWORLD). But Teka has been taken to be Attica - and Attica is the Greek peninsula on which Athens is sited, not a character in the Minotaur myth. More puzzling is the naming of Sezom - which seems too close to Moses to be accidental, perhaps there was originally meant to be more importance attached to the similarity of the Nimons to a plague of locusts than comes across in the finished production . . .

Other references are peppered throughout the script, such as Soldeed's allusions to Bismark's description of his aspiration for Germany after its unification in the late nineteenth century: "an empire of fire, steel, and blood." When he finds two Nimons rather than Romana inside the capsule, the Doctor quotes Hamlet: "Oh my prophetic soul," although the context is rather different - the Doctor is surprised, whereas Hamlet was acknowledging the truth of his suspicions and the message from his father's ghost. Perhaps Soldeed *should* have quoted from Webster as he died.

The minimalist design juxtaposes the two technologies - the Nimons' and the remnants of the original Skonnan Empire. The triangular symbol of the Nimon (based on its horns) is everywhere: helmets, lapels, columns, doorways, the shape of the spaceships, even echoed in the Nimons' formation as they stride through the Power Complex towards the end of the story. But the "operatic" costumes too often jar with the bland but cluttered sets. When the designs are in harmony the effect is obvious and pleasing - the best images are of the Skonnan guards (complete with cloaks) patrolling the area where the TARDIS lands, silhouetted against the angry, red, Wagnerian skies of Skonnos.

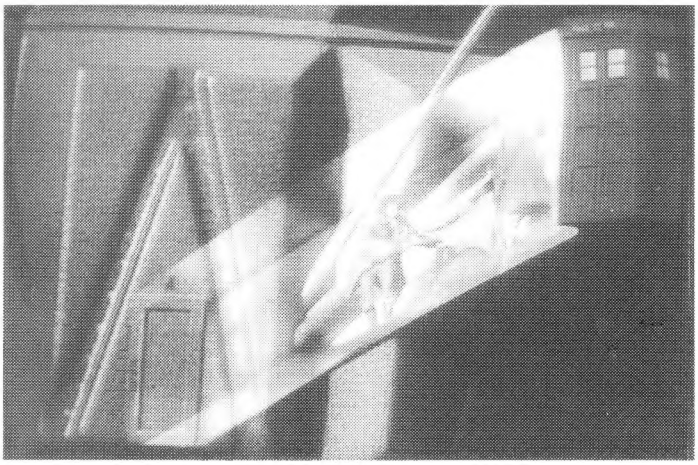
But such sequences are the exception. Probably due to the rush and lack of finances, the individual elements of the production fail to gel into a cohesive and artistically coherent whole. The heterogeneity of character and performance is the most obvious instance of this, but the problem is endemic. Even Dudley Simpson's musical score is not only musically unadventurous but often misplaced - or missing from key sequences.

And this uncoordinated diversity of design is why THE HORNS OF NIMON is ultimately a failure. When the Nimon says in part three "The programme will continue," we are almost disappointed.

But there is potential. Part four is a definite upturn - better paced and probably given more care and studio time. One sequence in particular is worth describing in detail as an example of how THE HORNS OF NIMON could have turned out . . .

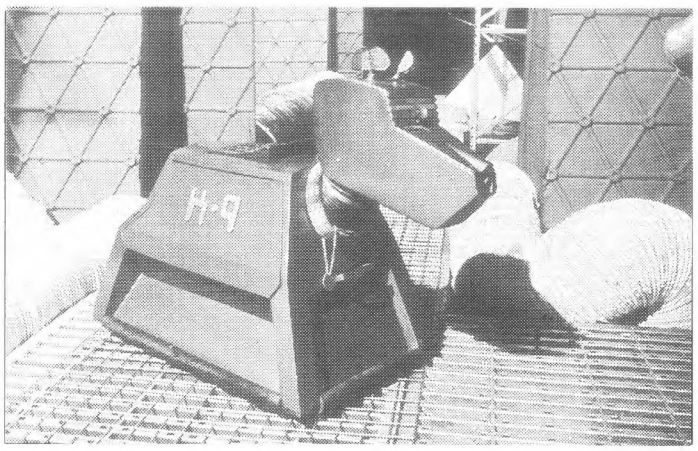
Teka is alone, separated from Seth, wandering nervously through the ever-changing corridors of the Complex as the light slowly flashes red. She finds herself in the Larder - the Co-Pilot's body on a slab. Teka reaches out, and touches the Co-Pilot's face, afraid that the body will collapse like the last one she touched. There is a sting of music as she touches it, but nothing happens. She backs away into next room, and finds the palettes with Anethan bodies in - and sees her friends inside, apparently dead. Teka turns to find Soldeed behind her, and fires her gun at him - it is empty. She keeps trying until Soldeed takes it from her and twists her arm up behind her back. In doing so, he turns Teka towards the door - and her eyes widen in fright. Soldeed takes her hand and holds it out as if she is a gift. Teka tries to pull away. In the doorway is the Nimon (we see his face in medium close-shot), light flashing red behind. The camera pulls back slightly as two other Nimons step forward to either side of the first (forming a triangle). Soldeed lets Teka's hand drop as he backs away in horror and surprise.

Throughout this sequence there is no dialogue. The camera work is fluid, the red lighting flashing slowly throughout. For once the music is well-placed and effective while the background sounds blend well with the emerging low-level Nimon growls. The threat to Teka is constantly changing - she is alone and lost; nervous about the Co-Pilot's body; finds the bodies in the palettes; realises that her friends are inside - apparently dead; faces Soldeed - with a useless gun; is offered to the Nimon; is confronted with three Nimons.



The scene culminates in the revelation to Soldeed that the Nimon is not the last of his race - and Soldeed's whole premise and world collapses, leading to and motivating his subsequent madness.

If the production team had been able to lavish as much time and attention on the rest of the production as on this one short scene, there is little question that THE HORNS OF NIMON would have been acceptable, if not classic, **Doctor Who** story. As it is, too many individual interpretations pull away from any central imagery or direction. The result is piecemeal - a production that is at odds with its material and with itself. It is occasionally inspired, when the elements (apparently accidentally) happen to work to each others' advantages, but all too often the result is boring, or even embarrassing. At its best, THE HORNS OF NIMON is good, competent television. But all too many sequences seem like they are from the worst **Doctor Who** story ever made. □



Audience

ITV (London region) SATURDAY 22nd DECEMBER 1979

SPORT	NEWS	ARTS ON	HAPPY DAYS	film DIGBY, THE BIGGEST DOG IN THE WORLD			XMAS SALE OF THE CENTURY	SEARCH FOR A STAR		film RED SUN		NEWS	RED SUN contd.	
5:00	5:30	6:00	6:30	7:00	7:30	8:00	8:30	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30	11:00		

BBC 1

SPORT	NEWS	ARTS	BASIL BRUSH XMAS SHOW	DR. WHO Nim. (1)	CHRISTMAS SNOWTIME SPECIAL		BUTTER -FLIES	PAUL DANIELS MAGIC SHOW	DALLAS		NEWS	MATCH OF THE DAY		PARKIN -SON
5:00	5:30	6:00	6:30	7:00	7:30	8:00	8:30	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30	11:00		

BBC 2

HORN IN	SOME-THING ELSE (arts)		A DIARY OF BRITAIN	film THE BEATLES AT CHRISTMAS; HELP!			NEWS	FOUR CLOWNS Hal Roach Omnibus			HINGE AND BRACKET	NEWS	film ANCHOR AWEIGH	

It was a sad end to a publicly very successful three years for **Doctor Who**'s out-going Producer. Instead of the grand finale of SHADA, which had been planned and budgeted as a far more spectacular season wrap-up than THE ARMAGEDDON FACTOR, and which would have epitomised the show's house-style under Messrs. Williams and Adams, viewers were left with a somewhat lacklustre close. The final scene in SHADA should have been of the Doctor activating the TARDIS Randomiser again, emphasising the dramatic statement that it was time to go off into the unknown once more - to land who knows where, who knows when...

Neither was it that easy for viewers to know that the current season had ended. The announcements following episode four's broadcast were more devoted to plugging the current range of **Doctor Who** records available in shops than to promising when the series itself would return. Worse still, a strike among some of the printers of "Radio Times" in January 1980 meant that several regions were left either without copies of new editions, or were supplied with very restricted quotas.

As with the previous year there was no break in the season to allow for Christmas, a fact which resulted in mixed fortunes as far as ratings for THE HORNS OF NIMON were concerned. Part one, screened on the last Saturday before Christmas, attracted not only the lowest rating for the season, but also the lowest rating since INFERNO was shown in 1970. With just six million viewers it did tie with part five of THE TIME MONSTER, but scored much lower, at position 100, in the national viewing chart compared to its 1972 predecessor. Last minute Christmas shopping was undoubtedly a factor behind this low performance, but, equally, ITV managed a ratings coup by network screening the Disney film, *Digby the Biggest Dog in the World* at six o'clock, thus eclipsing the start of **Doctor Who** by ten minutes.

ITV (London region) SATURDAY 12th JANUARY 1980

SPORT	NEWS	OH BOY (pop)	HAPPY DAYS	film SHE WORE A YELLOW RIBBON			SEARCH FOR A STAR	ENEMY AT THE DOOR		NEWS	HEARTLAND			
5:00	5:30	6:00	6:30	7:00	7:30	8:00	8:30	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30	11:00		

BBC 1

SPORT	WONDER WOMAN -new-	NEWS	DR. WHO Nim. (4)	JIM'LL FIX IT	ALL CREATURES GREAT & SMALL		DICK EMERY SHOW	DALLAS (feature length episode)			NEWS	MATCH OF THE DAY		
5:00	5:30	6:00	6:30	7:00	7:30	8:00	8:30	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30	11:00		

BBC 2

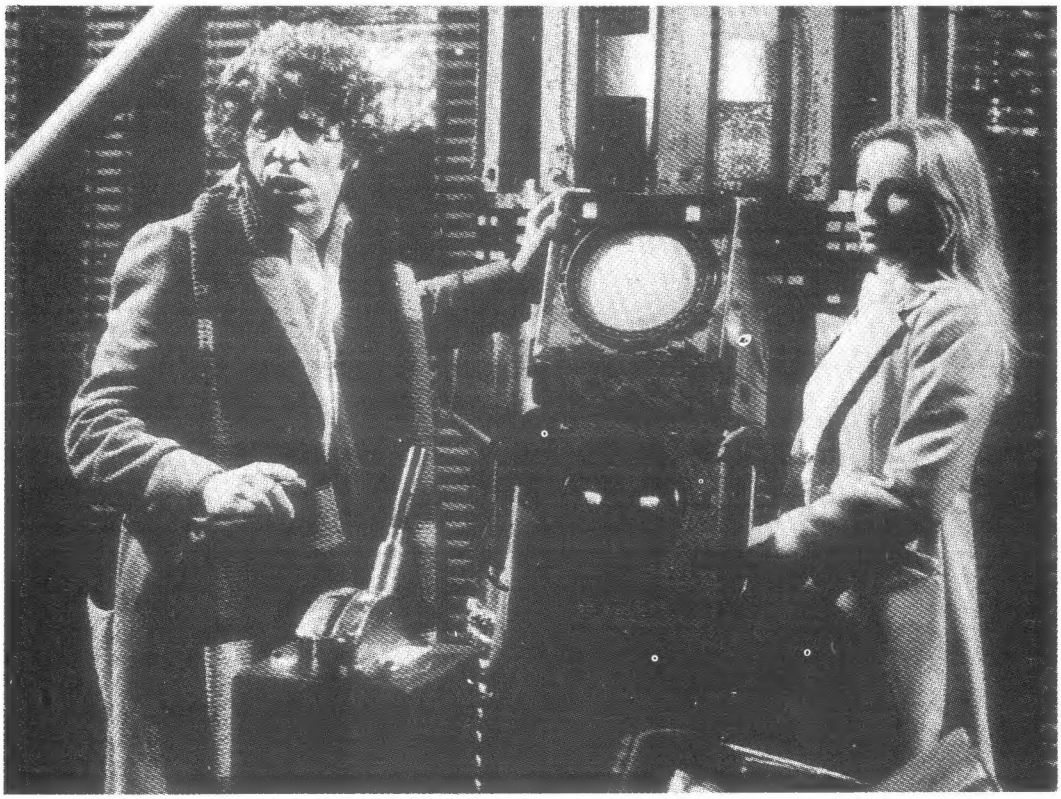
film MOONFLEET		SKY AT NIGHT	MR. SMITH GARDEN	opera THE GOLDEN COCKEREL		NEWS	THE GOLDEN COCKEREL contd.		film LITTLE CAESAR			PLAY-HOUSE	SET BY SWANN	

Thereafter the serial's fortunes did improve. Episode two saw ratings bounce back to 8.8 million, and a rise to 56th position. Partly this was in response to Lalla Ward appearing on Noel Edmond's **Swap Shop** programme that morning to promote the series, but also in part ITV did its bit for the BBC by reverting to the former policy of not screening networked shows opposite **Doctor Who**. On December 29th the best ITV could managed was **CHiPS** (LWT & Yorkshire), **Chopper Squad** (ATV) and **The Life and Times of Grizzly Adams** (Southern).

Part three saw a further improvement to 9.8M and 40th position nationally, with episode four closing the season with an impressive 10.4 million viewers and at number 26 in the charts - making it **Doctor Who**'s third best performing episode of the season, even allowing for the ten week ITV strike in the autumn.

An overall average of 8.75 million viewers ensured that THE HORNS OF NIMON was favourably regarded by BBC department heads, although that sentiment was not echoed by the fans who almost universally panned this serial; expressing dismay over its cheap look, its "pantomime" acting and the "Gary Glitter" appearance of the Nimons.

Ironically **Doctor Who** faded from television screens just as ITV was gearing up to air a programme which, in time, might have given BBC programme planners more cause for concern. As part of their new year broadcasting schedules several ITV regions, including ATV and Granada, opted to place a new comic science-fiction show directly opposite **Doctor Who** - Robin Williams' highly successful series **Mork and Mindy**. □



THE HORNS OF NIMON

Season 17
Story 108
5L
Episodes 518 - 521

CAST

Doctor Who Tom Baker
Romana Lalla Ward
Voice of K-9 David Brierley
Pilot Bob Hornery (1)
Co-Pilot Malcolm Terris (1-2; reprise of 3; dead body in 4)
Seth Simon Gipps-Kent
Teka Janet Ellis
Soldeed Graham Crowden
Sorak Michael Osborne
Sezom John Bailey (4)
Voice of the Nimons Clifford Norgate
Nimon 1 Robin Sherringham
Nimon 2 Bob Appleby (3-4)
Nimon 3 Trevor St. John Hacker (3-4)

SMALL & NON-SPEAKING

Anethans Nicholas Drack (1-4), Daniel Tabori (1-4), Rachel Wheeler (1-4), Zena Daire (1-4), Katy Jarret (1-4)
Guards Terry Gurry (2-3), Joe Santo (2-3), Derek Suthern (2-3), Edmund Thomas (2-3), Norman Bradley (2-3), Peter Roy (2-3), Paul Barton (2-3), David Glen (2-3)
Skonnon Elders Peter Jackson (2-3), Roy Seeley (2-3), Trevor Wedlock (2-3), Ronald Mayer (2-3), Robert Baker (2-3), Roy Brent (2-3), Ray Lavender (2-3), Donald Groves (3), David Harris (2-3), Jim Delaney (2-3), Eric French (2-3), Derek Chafer (3)
Anethan Corpses Gary Gold, Jane Foot, Debbi Thomson

CREW

Title Music Ron Grainer & the BBC Radiophonic Workshop
Designer Graeme Story
Design Assistant Rorie Mitchell
Costume Designer June Hudson
Make-up Artist Christine Walmsley-Cotham
Make-up Assistants Francoise Cresson, Jenny Hughes, Christine Greenwood
Visual Effects Designer Peter Pegrum
Production Assistant Henry Foster
Director's Assistant Elizabeth Sherry
Assistant Floor Manager Rosemary Chapman
Floor Assistant Sally Bates
Studio Lighting Nigel Wright
Technical Manager Derek Thompson
Studio Sound John Hartshorn
Grams Operator Gordon Phillipson
Senior Cameraman Alec Wheal
Crew 11
Vision Mixer James Gould
Electronic Effects Dave Jervis
Videotape Editor Rod Waldron
Show Working Supervisor Chick Hetherington
Special Sound Dick Mills
Incidental Music Dudley Simpson
Writer Anthony Read
Production Unit Manager John Nathan-Turner
Script Editor Douglas Adams
Directors Kenny McBain
Producer **Graham Williams**

Part 1: 22 December 1979, 18.11.20 (25'41") 6.0m viewers, 100th
Part 2: 29 December 1979, 17.54.07 (25'00") 8.8m viewers, 56th
Part 3: 5 January 1980, 18.21.30 (23'26") 9.8m viewers, 40th
Part 4: 12 January 1980, 18.06.29 (24' 31") 10.4m viewers, 26th

RECORDING

Studio session 1 (studio TC3)
24tSeptember 1979 - Rehearse 14:00; Record 19:30 - 22:00
25 September 1979 - Rehearse 10:30; Rehearse/Record 14:30 - 17:15; Record 19:30 - 22:00
26 September1979 - Rehearse 10:30; Rehearse/Record 14:30 - 17:15; Record 19:30 - 22:00
Studio session 2 (studio TC6)
7 October 1979 - Rehearse/Record 14:30 - 17:15; Record 19:30 - 22:00
8 October 1979 - Rehearse 10:30; Rehearse/Record 14:30 - 17:15; Record 19:30 - 22:00
9 October 1979 - Rehearse 10:30; Rehearse/Record 14:30 - 17:15; Record 19:30 - 22:00
Gallery only (Electronic Effects in studio TC8)
15 October 1979 - Rehearse/Record 11:00 - 22:00

PROJECT NUMBERS

Part 1: 02349/2751
Part 2: 02349/2752
Part 3: 02349/2753
Part 4: 02349/2754

PROGRAMME NUMBERS

Part 1: LDLB017L/72/X
Part 2: LDLB018F/71/X
Part 3: LDLB019A/72/X
Part 4: LDLB010T/71/X

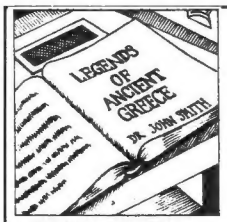
FILM (all 35mm)

Part 1:
Opening Titles 32"
Closing Titles 53"

Part 2:
Opening Titles 32"
Closing Titles 53"

Part 3:
Opening Titles 32"
Closing Titles 53"

Part 4:
Opening Titles 28"
Closing Titles 53"
Specially shot effects footage (details not available) □



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TULLOCH, John & ALVARADO, Manuel - *Doctor Who: The Unfolding Text* (Macmillan, 1983 - detailed analysis of CITY OF DEATH)
WEBSTER - *The White Devil*

FILM

Digby: the Biggest Dog in the World (dr Joseph McGrath, 1973)

VIDEO

Doctor Who - The Tom Baker Years (BBC Video, BBCV4839), 1992

TELEVISION

Blake's Seven (BBC, 1978 - 1981)
Blue Peter (BBC,1958-)
Boon (Central, 1986-1992)
CHiPS (NBC, 1977-1983)
Chopper Squad (1975)
Doctor Who (BBC, 1963-1989)
Grange Hill (BBC, 1978-)
Hammer House of Horror (Hammer Films/ITC/Chips/Cinema Arts, 1980)
Inspector Morse (Zenith, 1987-1993)
The Life and Times of Grizzly Adams (NBC/Sunn Classic,1976-1977)
The Lotus Eaters (BBC, 1972-1973)
Mackenzie (BBC, 1980)
Mork and Mindy (ABC/Paramount/ Henderson-Miller-Miklis,1978-1981)
The Multi-Coloured Swap Shop (BBC, 1976-1982)
The Omega Factor (BBC Scotland, 1979)
Spaceships of the Mind (BBC, 1978)
Star Trek (Paramount/Desilu/Norway, 1966-1969)

DOCTOR WHO

City of Death (5H)
The Creature from the Pit (5G)
The Evil of the Daleks (LL)
The Horns of Nimon (5L)
Horror of Fang Rock (4V)
The Leisure Hive (5N)
The Ribos Operation (5A)
The Time Monster (OOO)
Warriors' Gate (5S)

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